In calculating statistics based on answers provided by respondents, the team found that approximately 75 percent of papers printed had not been resubmitted, a sign that work also goes into targeting submissions appropriately. For the 25 percent of papers that had been resubmitted after being rejected, the researchers found that most followed a step down process whereby submitters first submitted to high impact journals than lower ones where they met with eventual success. It was in this group that the team found what they described as the biggest surprise, that rejected papers once published elsewhere received more citations relative to others in the same journal than did those accepted on first submission.

The researchers suggest that the higher citation rate for the resubmitted papers is likely due to reviews offered by peers, referees and editors that together result in a better paper. This indicates, they say, that perhaps the quality of papers published in scientific journals might be improved overall if more papers from first time submitters were rejected. Another possibility is that papers that go against the status quo tend to get rejected more often than those that toe the line, which would cause a bigger stir, and hence citations when eventually published.


**ABSTRACT**

The study of science-making is a growing discipline that builds largely on online publication and citation databases, while prepublication processes remain hidden. Here, we report results from a large-scale survey of the submission process, covering 923 scientific journals from the biological sciences in years 2006–2008. Manuscript flows among journals revealed a modular submission network, with high-impact journals preferentially attracting...
submissions. However, about 75% of published articles were submitted first to the journal that would publish them, and high-impact journals published proportionally more articles that had been resubmitted from another journal. Submission history affected postpublication impact: Resubmissions from other journals received significantly more citations than first-intent submissions, and resubmissions between different journal communities received significantly fewer citations.

Press release

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